

# Developing the Next Wave of Sustainment Leaders

Teamwork and collaboration are helping the dedicated instructors at the Army Logistics University to prepare the next generation of sustainers for success.

■ By Maj. Kyle Smith and Maj. Howard Van Matre

Many years of sustained combat operations have proven that teamwork and collaboration remain the bedrock of a sustainer's ability to enable operational success on the battlefield. However, as the Army continues to modernize the force, adapt to emerging threats, and prepare for future wars, the Army Logistics University (ALU) must prepare the next wave of sustainment leaders to succeed in unpredictable and challenging environments.

The forward operating base-centric battlespace from which we have operated will soon become obsolete and inadequate for sustaining operations against peer adversaries during large-scale combat operations. Future sustainment leaders must be more agile, adaptive, and flexible in anticipating requirements. Building the ultimate team through collaboration with joint, interagency, and multinational partners will ensure sustainment leaders can provide the greatest capability.

This article discusses current ALU initiatives to prepare the next generation of sustainment leaders for success on the future battlefield. These initiatives focus on critical thought in complex, austere, and ambiguous environments and how teamwork and collaboration enable warfighter support.

## Addressing the Future Fight

Emerging Army doctrine envisions a dramatic shift from the counterinsurgency fight against terrorist organizations that we currently face in

combat. We now have the potential to face near-peer and peer competitors who have spent considerable time and money over the last two decades studying the U.S. military while modernizing their weapons and systems.

Successful sustainment within the Multi-Domain Battle environment during large-scale combat operations is a team effort that includes our sister services, strategic enablers, special operations forces, and host-nation partners. In future conflicts, U.S. forces will encounter a degraded operational environment in which the tactical advantage may be significantly reduced.

This chaotic and contested battlefield will require sustainment leaders to anticipate logistics requirements in a disconnected environment, where the battle happens more quickly than technology and communications can transmit information. Accordingly, ALU is at the forefront of incorporating doctrine from Field Manual (FM) 3-0, Operations, into all professional military education curricula.

Within the Logistics Leader College, the Basic Officer Leader Department has launched a pilot program to prepare Quartermaster, Ordnance, and Transportation lieutenants to serve in a broad spectrum of multifunctional logistics assignments, regardless of branch affiliation.

This program, called the Logistics Basic Officer Leader Course, provides foundational knowledge from each of the logistics branches and produces more agile and adaptive junior leaders who are fully capable of supporting high-intensity conflict against

peer adversaries. All individual and team-oriented exercises, which include increased field rigor, fully incorporate new doctrine from FM 3-0.

ALU's Applied Logistics Studies Department, which oversees the Support Operations Course (SOC), the Theater Sustainment Planners Course (TSPC), Global Combat Support System-Army training, and the Sustainment Pre-Command Course, challenges students with realistic tactical, operational, and strategic sustainment concept of support exercises with decisive action scenarios. Course capstone exercises require students to develop tactical- and operational-level sustainment plans in support of maneuver forces conducting high-intensity operations against a peer or near-peer competitor.

At the Technical Logistics College (TLC), warrant officer students prepare and conduct capstone briefings referencing FM 3-0 and are required to demonstrate a clear understanding of decisive action, phases of operations, Multi-Domain Battle, and the systems used for materiel readiness tracking while preparing for the loss of degraded communications.

These fundamental large-scale combat operations concepts complement the technical instruction warrant officers receive in their basic, advanced, and Intermediate Level Education follow-on courses.

## Obtaining the Right Talent

Leader development occurs through a blend of institutional, operational, and self-development



*Col. Jamal E. Wigglesworth, Army Logistics University (ALU) commandant, left, passes the newly uncased colors of the ALU Support Battalion to Lt. Col. Matthew K. Anastasi during the 71st Transportation Battalion inactivation ceremony on March 28, 2018. Also pictured is Command Sgt. Maj. Leabarron J. Bates, who helped uncasing the colors and serves as the battalion's command sergeant major. (Photo by Terrance Bell)*

activities. Institutional professional development requires talented leaders to facilitate a world-class learning experience at the Army's learning institution for sustainers.

Such leaders are responsible for designing and facilitating rigorous professional military education course curricula. As new doctrine emerges across the force, ALU's instructors and leaders continually revise and

update curricula in the pursuit of developing more capable sustainers.

ALU instructors are professional men and women with extensive backgrounds in supporting combat operations around the globe. They have a wide variety of experiences, which could include recent deployments, prior assignments as combat training center observer, coach, trainers, and operational assignments.

Additionally, ALU instructors play a significant role in developing and enhancing curricula to meet the demands of sustaining large-scale combat operations at the division and corps levels and in collaboration with joint and host-nation partners.

Depending on specific course outcomes, ALU instructors link tactical, operational, and strategic levels of sustainment through complex sce-

narios and field rigor. This linkage is critical to developing a thorough understanding across the full range of combat operations.

For example, TLC students attending the warrant officer courses conduct concept of support briefings encompassing multiple echelons of sustainment. Conducting these exercises leads to a more thorough understanding of decisive action in a Multi-Domain Battle environment.

Likewise, Logistics Captains Career Course instructors continually revise and update the course's curriculum in pursuit of developing more capable sustainers. Students now complete

driven educational experience for all professionals.

To achieve the university president's vision of offering an exceptional logistics education while building a multifunctional culture necessary to win in Multi-Domain Battle, ALU leverages the combined power of all logistics cohorts. Building teamwork across ALU throughout the many departments creates a synergy among the students that will carry and propel them to their follow-on duty assignments.

Basic Officer Leader Course students conduct a practical exercise in counseling that integrates Logistics

systems in preparation for the Basic Officer Leader Course, which they attend with newly commissioned second lieutenants. This initiative gives both the interns and lieutenants a valuable experience that enhances the relationship between military and civilian sustainment leaders.

Sustainment leaders of varying ranks and backgrounds must work together as a team to achieve success in the Applied Logistics Studies Department SOC, the TSPC, and the Sustainment Pre-Command Course. Successful completion of the SOC and TSPC rely on teamwork between officers, warrant officers, and NCOs. This ex-

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three distinct blocks of instruction: common core material, branch-specific logistics fundamentals, and a staff-focused exercise requiring realistic deliverables based on a decisive action scenario. To graduate, each student must complete an individual concept of support briefing based on FM 3-0 principles.

### Fostering Teamwork

Today's sustainment leaders face challenges that require cohesion and teamwork well beyond the scope of small-scale squad and platoon activities. A multi-domain, large-scale combat operation will challenge leaders to forge teams capable of analyzing data, conceptualizing the battlefield, and making informed decisions aimed at facilitating warfighter support. Consequently, building the ultimate team and fostering a culture of cooperation is at the forefront of ALU's mission and vision.

While each college within ALU varies in regard to its mission and general audience, the common theme across all organizations is providing a warfighter-focused and results-

driven educational experience for all professionals. This exercise allows students from both departments to further enhance their written and oral communication skills and promotes the officer and NCO professional relationship at the unit level.

The NCO Academy students also gain invaluable experience leading physical fitness training sessions with their lieutenant counterparts. This gives young officers the valuable experience of understanding physical training fundamentals while affording NCOs the ability to increase their proficiency in training and leading Soldiers.

The Office of the Chief of Transportation hosts officers, warrant officers, and NCOs for "Wheelhouse Wednesday" events, in which professionals from across the regiment network, socialize, and often meet fellow students assigned to the same duty locations.

At the College for Professional and Continuing Education, the Intern Logistics Studies Program educates Department of Army civilian logistics interns on a number of logistics

experience replicates the students' future operational environment.

Senior leaders attending the Sustainment Pre-Command Course serve as brigade and echelons-above-brigade commanders, and they gain experience with receiving concept of sustainment briefings from SOC and TSPC classes while providing valuable feedback for students.

Building the next wave of sustainment leaders requires teamwork, collaboration, and dedicated professionals at institutions like the Army Logistics University. Future success against near-peer and peer competitors conducting large-scale combat operations in increasingly challenging environments depends on our preparation and development of young leaders today. Instructors and students alike must pursue lifelong learning and continuing professional military education.

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Maj. Kyle Smith and Maj. Howard Van Matre are instructors in the Applied Logistics Studies Department at ALU.